

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5603

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB PE
SUBJ: SUTEP TEACHERS STRIKE CONTINUES

REF: LIMA 5503

1. THE STRIKE OF EDUCATORS IN PERU'S PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM CONTINUES AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE WINTER VACATION (DURING THE MONTH OF JULY) HAS BEEN CANCELLED IN ORDER TO MAKE UP FOR TIME LOST IN THE TEACHERS STRIKE NOW IN ITS EIGHTH WEEK (PARA 5, REFTEL). THE TEACHERS UNION SUTEP HELD THREE DEMONSTRATIONS IN LIMA LAST WEEK, THE LARGEST PROTEST JUNE 23 IN THE PLAZA DES ARMAS. POLICE BROKE UP THE MEETINGS WITH WATER AND TEAR GAS. ANOTHER PROTEST IS UNDERWAY TODAY.

2. ALTHOUGH THE RANK AND FILE OF THE TEACHERS PROBABLY DO NOT SHARE THE IDEOLOGICAL LEANINGS OF SUTEP LEADER HORACIO ZEVALLOS, THE LOW SALARIES OF THE TEACHERS HAVE PROVIDED THE MILITANT PEKING-LINE LEADER WITH A BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUE THAT SECURES HIM SUPPORT FOR APOLITICAL OR EVEN ANTI-COMMUNIST MEMBERS OF THE TEACHERS UNION. NEITHER THE GOVERNMENT-CREATED UNION SERP NOR THE MOSCOW COMMUNIST-LINE FENTEP APPEARS TO HAVE MUCH POPULAR SUPPORT.

3. NON-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS WITHIN THE EDUCATION FIELD (APRISTAS)
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ARE MEMBERS OF SUTEP. THE APRISTA GROUP DOES NOT THINK IT HAS SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO TAKE CONTROL OF SUTEP AWAY FROM ZEVALLOS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT IF THE APRISTAS FORM A NEW TEACHER ORGANIZATION THE GOP WOULD BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM. HOWEVER, THE INCAPACITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE ANY SUBSTANTIAL PAY INCREASE CAUSES THE APRISTA ELEMENTS TO DOUBT THE USEFULNESS NOW OF LEAVING SUTEP AND SETTING UP A COMPETITIVE UNION.

4. PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ IN HIS TALK WITH THE PRESS JUNE 23 CHARACTERIZED THE SITUATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS "UNHAPPY" AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SOME WAY TO OPEN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE TEACHERS WOULD BE FOUND. NONETHELESS, THE GOP'S DETERMINATION TO AVOID MAKING ANY CONCESSIONS TO SUTEP AN ACT WHICH THE GOP FEARS WOULD INSURE RADICAL COMMUNIST CONTROL OF THE TEACHERS FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE, HAS BROUGHT THE SITUATION TO AN IMPASSE AND NO SOLUTION APPEARS LIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. WE DO NOT HAVE ACCURATE DATA ON STRIKE'S EFFECTIVENESS, BUT CANCELLATION OF VACATION INDICATES IT HAS BEEN QUITE EFFECTIVE IN MANY PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. SHLAUDEMAM

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